

URBAN FORESTS

Contribution to Tourism on the North Atlantic Coast of Argentina

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The objective of this work was to rate through an internationally-accepted methodology the contribution to tourism of the urban forests located on the north atlantic coast of the province of Buenos Aires, in Argentina. We worked in three sites of the argentine atlantic coast: Partido de la Costa, Pinamar and Villa Gesell (Buenos Aires, Argentina). The method applied was “hedonic prices”, relating the price of leases paid in the summer of 2017 with structural and environmental variables of the housing. The models showed a good statistical fit and significance in the studied variables. The estimated parameters show that tourists are willing to pay up to \$23,000 more for moving from an area without trees to rent a property under a forest, and around \$1,550 more for being 100 m closer to the sea. The structural variable was highly significant, implying that the income in Pinamar and Villa Gesell is superior in \$17,000 to Partido de la Costa. It is confirmed that the shortest distance to the sea increases the rent price, even though it is not the only environmental factor since the environmental services of the forests in the study area are also generators of tourism value. Finally, the results generated by the model, allow recommending to the public sector and the real estate developers to pay attention to forest planning, to select the species carefully and to use planting configurations that take care the environment, thus aiming to improve the sustainability of tourist territory.

KEY WORDS: *Valuation, hedonic prices, environmental services, sustainable tourism.*